# The Leading Players In the Great World Baseball Series


# The Baseball Champions of 1911

**John McGraw.**

The lively little pepper-pod who manages the Giants, and who is therefore entitled, on the strength of his achievements, to be styled the champion leader of the National league, has won his honors on sheer merit, not on luck or favor. His team is not a sudden affair, so to speak—not a club which gained unexpected aid from minor league recruits or new wonders from the colleges or bushes. Ever since his champions of 1905 went to pieces, McGraw has been working on the construction of another winning club, patiently working on good or dubious material, educating young performers, and finishing them into the compact machine which finally made good. The club has been a little stronger every season, but never quite strong enough. There was always something lacking among the youngsters—a lack of finish somewhere, a crying need for just a little improvement somewhere else. At last, in 1911, after five years of drill and practice, the Giants have been polished to the right degree, and the perfected team has won a flag. Great is the credit due the hustling team—and greater still the credit due to John McGraw.

McGraw was for years a player on the old Baltimore champions, and it was there he learned the finesse and strategy of the game. He won pennants for New York in 1904 and 1905, took the honors of the world from the Athletics in the latter year, and now hopes to be successful in the big series of October.

**Hans Wagner.**

A few of the morning glory or temporary batsmen of 1911—fellows who did not take part in as many games as Hans—will doubtless have batting averages superior to that of the great Wagner. For all season work, however, hitting done day by day and week by week, there was no one who surpassed the mighty German, and his record of the year was doubly creditable in view of the handicaps under which he labored. As athletics go, Wagner is now an old man, far beyond the usual period of baseball activity. His muscles are stiffer now than in the days of his youth, and he is no longer able to dash over the bases with the speed of long ago. To add to his troubles, he had a badly injured leg, which retired him for some weeks in August and September. Returning to the game, the grand old warrior shifted from short to first, and, though hobbling and lame, unable to bear out many of the hits which would formerly have been sure safeties for him, he played out the string in nervy fashion.

Wagner will hardly stay in the game much longer. In all probability, 1912 will see the passing of this splendid ball player, one of the greatest of his generation, but he will retire with a wonderful record—that of never batting under .300 during the whole of his career.

**Bob Bescher.**

Bob Bescher, champion base stealer of the National league, who excelled even his fine record of 1910 by several added thefts, deserves much more credit for his work than the figures show. Cobb, of the American league, stole several more sacks than the burly Cincinnatian, but it must be remembered that Cobb is a heavier hitter and also receives many more complimentary passes from frightened pitchers. In proportion to the number of times he reaches first, Bescher actually steals more bases than the great Cobb. Cobb steals about one base to every three of his hits or passes, while Bescher steals about once in every two times he is given the chance for action.

Bescher is of gigantic size, somewhat resembling in general make up Big Bill Lange, the Chicago idol of long ago. He is only a boy in age, and has many years of increasing usefulness before him, as his batting grows better each season, and his fielding is of the most brilliant character.

**"Rube" (Richard) Marquard.**

The real pitching star of the 1911 season, so far as the National league was concerned, was a fellow who for three years had been a joke, a butt, an object of derision for press and fans—Dick Marquard of the Giant hurling crew. Bought in 1908 for the huge price of $11,000, Marquard was a ludicrous failure year after year, working but seldom, and showing neither control nor science when he was sent in. And yet, through these seasons of misfortune and unpopularity, McGraw clung to the tall, angular lefthander, maintaining that he would yet become a winner, and keeping him on the payroll when even Class A minor clubs had ceased to make offers for him.

With the dawn of the 1911 season, Marquard budded forth as the wonder of them all. The years of teaching had at least borne fruit, and the wry-neck, knock-kneed, grotesque-looking pitcher proceeded to mow down the other clubs like stubble. He pitched some of the most wonderful games of the season; he held up the team when the great Mathewson was having a losing streak, and he simply eased New York into the championship. Without him, the Giants would again have run second to the Cubs, beyond a question.

Not only was Marquard the sensational surprise and the big winner of the season, but also the champion strikeout pitcher of his league. His leaping, twisting lefthand curves had a bend to them that the batters missed entirely, and he hung up a strikeout record that is likely to stand for many seasons. Incidentally, these strikeouts saved Richard many a game, and thus helped Marquard and McGraw to the goal of victory.

**Frank Schulte.**

Not in many seasons has either of the big leagues seen such a home run record as was hung up by Frank Schulte during 1911—a series of four base wallops that materially helped his team in their battle for the flag, and which came pretty near to landing the pennant for the fighting Cubs. Schulte was tied for the home run honors with Fred Beck in 1910, but Beck had no chance in the recent campaign. He was only used as a sub by both Cincinnati and Philadelphia, but even if he had been in the full 154 games he would hardly have competed with Schulte, whose demon bat seemed to have the fences marked down to a certainty.

Schulte has been a valued member of the Cubs for many seasons. He looks like the laziest man on earth as he lopes languidly around his pasture, but the Chicago bugs have long ago learned to appreciate the skill and speed that are hidden under that easy going style. As a fielder, batter and all round winner, Schulte has few rivals in the game today.

**Frank Baker.**

Frank Baker, whose long, driving wallops piled up the home runs and three baggers at an alarming rate during 1911, is one athlete who fooled the critics. After seeing Baker in his first few games with Connie Mack's fast team, the scribes remarked that he stood so hunched up at the plate that he could only hit the ball in one direction. This, they figured, meant a complete annihilation of his batting average as soon as the fielders learned where to play for him, and Baker, therefore, was doomed to be a failure. There was only one trouble with this prediction: Baker hit 'em so hard in that one groove that no fielder could stop 'em. Baker still hits them nearly all in the same spot, and his batting average continues to thrive, for the fielders simply cannot stop the bullets that he smashes at them. Frank is also a swell third baseman, and, taken all in all, one of the best bulwarks of the champion Philadelphia team.

**Ed. Walsh.**

Pitching for a club that had a fearful time to keep near the .500 mark, and which did not back up his work with much of the old time White Sox fielding, Ed. Walsh nevertheless had a remarkable season. The giant spitballer showed once more that the damp delivery does not hurt the arm, and also proved that he is just as good as he was two or three years ago. He pitched some 60 games, including those he finished to save other pitchers, he won something like .600 percent of them (and all this for a team that was usually under the .500 line) and he struck out more opponents than any other pitcher in the league. Another man like Walsh would have kept the White Sox up near the top of the circuit, and might have gained the flag.

Walsh came into the big league long ago, and was a failure for two or three seasons. He finally mastered the spitball delivery, and at once became a star, his strength and endurance helping his speed and all round skill through more games than any other pitcher has hurled in the same number of years since the American league was born.

**Connie Mack.**

Cornelius McGillicuddy was the name under which the long and bony manager of the champion Athletics was christened, but the scorers shortened this to Connie Mack well nigh 30 years ago. Originally a catcher, he graduated into the managerial ranks some 15 years back, handled the Milwaukee team with good success, and took charge of the Athletics when Philadelphia broke into the American league. Mack's team, always fighting hard, and always selected with grand judgment, won the pennant of 1902, copped again in 1905, only to be beaten by the Giants when it came to the sawoff for world's honors, and won out once more in 1910. This time they beat the Cubs in a brief but memorable series. The Athletics, ably handled and controled, once more came through victorious in 1911—a record of four pennants in 10 years. They owe a major part of their success to the wily, crafty, and soft spoken Connie, one of the best judges of ball players that ever led a team. He has an outfit made up of collegians and sand lot boys in about equal quantities, and every man of them plays ball for Connie Mack heart, soul, hands, feet, and brain besides.

**Jack Coombs.**

Jack Coombs, the iron man of the Athletics' pitching staff, is not a newcomer by any means, for quite a number of years have passed since Connie Mack plucked him from one of the little New England colleges. He was not a startling success as a pitcher for some time, and even played as a regular outfielder for the greater part of one season. During the last three years he "came back" wonderfully, and showed such endurance and good will in 1910 that he must be given credit for winning the flag. His work against the Cubs in the big series of last year will remain written in red letters in the archives of the game—it was a matchless exhibition. This season, Coombs has been less remarkable for brilliancy than for effectiveness and strength. He has worked in a multitude of games, and, although several hurlers may surpass his winning percentage, none of those above him has worked in any such number of battles. For all season pitching, of the reliable kind that goes to win a flag, the honors of the year must be given to Jack Coombs.

**Tyrus Cobb.**

Once more the wonderful Cobb—judged by many critics the most remarkable ball player of all time—comes through with the topmost honors of the American league. In 1910 Cobb won the batting laurels by the fraction of a point over Lajoie, but was dethroned as king of base runners by Eddie Collins. This time, Cobb shows at the finish as the best batsman, best base thief and best run getter of the lot, and shows his value most conclusively in all departments of the game. Never has Cobb shown better in every way. There is no sign of "going back" about Cobb's all season doings, and, as he is still but a kid in point of age, he should remain at the top of the deck for years to come.

Cobb is a slender fellow, rather frail in appearance, but with greyhound speed, while his judgment is something almost uncanny when it comes either to picking out a pitcher's offerings or darting around the bases. As an outfielder, he has few rivals, and shines almost as brightly in the defensive portion of the game as on the aggressive side.

The wonderful Tiger, who almost carried his team through to victory by his personal exertions at the bat and on the bases, is a Georgian by birth and residence, and was not a startlingly bright light among the southern ball players before he came to the fast company. Inside a few months, however, Cobb developed into the speed marvel of the age, and has held his rank at the top without a tumble.

# THE "IFS" OF 1911

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There is always a choice cluster of "ifs" when a league campaign is over—a bunch of reasons for misfortunes and defeat. The eager bugs can hug these "ifs" to their bosoms all through the winter, figure out what might or should have been, and sit back in blissful expectancy or rapt imagination. Surely the "ifs" of 1911 won't occur again in 1912?

It is just as well to think so—what would life be worth to losing fans if it wasn't for the "ifs"?

The "ifs" of 1911 were extremely numerous, too, and each of the four clubs that had pennant dreams but failed to win has a good, logical, wholly believable excuse for its failure to arrive. There were no "ifs" to handicap the Giants. McGraw's men went through the season in the best of health, and seemed immune to accident or injury. The Cubs, however, had far more than a proper share of trouble. Chance—not only the peerless manager of the club, but one of its most potent factors in the actual playing—was put out of it early. Repeated thumps on his head—pitched balls full upon the bean—retired him from the field, and the Cubs lost their captain, first baseman, star batter, and best baserunner. Taking Chance out of the lineup was like taking four men out of the ordinary team. He was not replaced all season at the bat, on first base, on the speed-paths, or in the fast machine-play of the club.

Knocking out Chance was enough to kill off most clubs, as if this wasn't enough, the pennant-chances were still further shattered by the early disability of John Evers, the life of the infield, and the star whose broken leg killed the Cubs' hopes in the world's series of 1910. Evers went all to pieces under a combination of physical ailments and business troubles, and was out of it for more than 120 games. Thus crippled, the Cubs made a glorious fight, and are surely justified in pleading the "ifs" for their failure to come through.

Pittsburg's "ifs" are perfectly valid, also. Wagner was disabled with a bad ankle just when the team was coming strong. By the time he was back at work, the Pirates had slipped down, and the lost ground could not be regained. Then, too, Gibson, the great catcher who was the backbone of the defense, was laid up with a lame arm, and the team played shakily without him. Pittsburg had its troubles, and its "ifs" had ample reason.

Philadelphia's "ifs" centered on the crippling of Charlie Dooin and the mid-season suspension of Magee. Magee's lay-off, a penalty imposed for slugging Umpire Finneran, hurt the team's batting materially. So did the breaking of John Titus' ankle, early in the year, but neither of these troubles hurt the Phils like the shattering of Dooin's leg just when the team was fighting galantly. Philadelphia lost its manager, captain, crack catcher, and star batsman—and the club fell like a wounded pigeon.

St. Louis attributes its downfall to the injury of Bresnahan just when the club was making its final stand. The other National League clubs, of course, have "ifs" ad libitum—but they were losers anyway.

The Detroit Tigers believe that they would have won out if Gainer had not been hurt and if Schmidt had not retrograded completely. Both reasons are strong, but would not the Athetics have won out by a bigger margin if Collins had not been hurt and out of it for quite a time?

The White Sox can only say that they would have done better if they had caught their stride early. Cleveland can assert that Lajoie's disability for over 60 games hurt their prospects. The rest of the American League teams played poor ball anyway—excuses won't befit them.

# MAJOR LEAGUE PROSPECTS FOR 1912

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Forecasting the prospects of the big leagues is a difficult job, and one that usually results in the forecaster converting himself into the gayly plumaged bird that is called the monkey. Teams change membership during the winter season; when the actual campaign is on, some of the recruits make good, others fall with a dismal thud; some of the veterans retrograde and thereby drag down their teams, and others show revived vigor, with the result that their clubs benefit accordingly.

It has been considered a cinch, when forecasting National League affairs in recent years, to assign Boston and Brooklyn to eighth and seventh places. That gave the prophet two sure things anyhow, and made him rest easier when it came to mapping out the destiny of the other six aggregations. Likewise, in the American League, it has been a pipe to stick Washington and St Louis at the south end of the procession. All of which may come through again in 1912—and it may not.

For the past few years, three teams in the National League have held the top positions—Chicago, Pittsburg, and New York. These three clubs outclassed all others, and the pennant has been passing back and forth among them—Pittsburg in 1909, Cubs in 1910, and Giants for the present season. Fourth place has been debatable, Philadelphia and Cincinnati fighting for that fairly desirable location. St. Louis hasn't had a look-in till this campaign, when Bresnahan pushed his Cardinals into good society for awhile, and finally settled down in fifth, shoving Cincinnati down to sixth—the big surprise of the National League season.

The Athletics and Tigers came to the front so prominently during the last two seasons that the old evenness and closeness of the American League teams is evidently destroyed—no one can say for how many years to come. A few seasons back, the American League clubs were so closely matched that five teams usually fought it out almost to the wire, but that's all over now, and six teams will have to rebuild enormously if they hope to cut any figure in the race of 1912.

That's the one snag that greets the forecaster when it comes to predicting for next year. To what extent will some of the weaker clubs, in both leagues, repair their line-ups? To what degree will they correct the mistakes of 1911?

About the only team in the National League that can be assigned a low rating for 1912, definitely and surely, is Brooklyn, and even the Brooklyn gang should make a far better fight than during the past campaign. Brooklyn has the pitchers—an elegant set of them—and can field beautifully, but is too weak at the bat to cut much figure, while it does not look as if any of the new Brooklyn recruits will be .300 sluggers.

The despised Bostons are sure to be dangerous next year, for the simple reason that they have gathered a crowd of genuine sluggers, fellows who can hit like fiends. Give them a couple of real pitchers, and they will make enough so, in fact, to be counted candidates for fifth position.

The fight among the Big Three, New York, Chicago, and Pittsburg, will be as hot as ever, but will be complicated by the fact that Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and St. Louis will all be knocking for admission to the upper circles. Any one of the three big teams may go back suddenly. Cincinnati is sure to show much better class next year than this. Philadelphia believes that it would have won the pennant but for Dooin's disability, and, with this sort of confidence for inspiration, will be up there fighting all the time. St. Louis has a great deal of the same sort of ginger, and ought to be a choice little trouble-maker every minute of the time, unless Bresnahan should get hurt in mid-season.

New York, with the development of Marquard, the spirit that goes with a championship, and the general layout of the club, ought to repeat, but will be hard-pressed at all stages. Pittsburg and the Cubs should again fight for second, with this difference in the result: the team that gets beaten in this battle for second honors will drop so fast at the fag-end of the season that Cincinnati or Philadelphia will come up and either tie it for second or acutally nose it out in the last week. The Reds, the Phils, and the Cardinals will have a tremendous scrap all summer, all three of them hovering around the .550 mark, and all three pretty well bunched at the finish.

The Athletics and the Tigers so utterly outclass all opposition in the American League that only wholly unforeseen and unexpected reinforcements can knock them out of first and second jobs for 1912. Of the two clubs, the Tigers should retrograde the faster, if they go back to any marked extent. That will mean that the Athletics again cop the gonfalon, with the Tigers second by a long margin.

Cleveland, which is showing great promise for the future, ought to shake off all competitors and sail into third place by a safe majority. The White Sox, who likewise have most promising material, ought to gain fourth, though hard-pressed by New York. That club—the New York Highlanders—owns magnificent players, who are thrown together in a helter-skelter fashion, and cannot seem to pull together. Boston, a once-brilliant team that has gone back pitifully, can be placed in sixth, leaving Washington and St. Louis to fight it out again.

There is one possibility, however—in fact, a probability. The American League is worried sick over St. Louis, over the loss of trade in that burg, and the big patronage given Bresnahan. It is likely that the Detroit team will be robbed of several stars, and an effort made to give St. Louis a winning team. In that event, Detroit will sink into the second division, and the reinforced Browns may land fifth or sixth, though nowhere near the top of the ladder.

Forecasting? A tough job, dear brethren. Ask the weather man.